

The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- From the President
- February Program
- January Minutes
- WSJT-X
- 73 de SV2ASP/A
- DX Contests

How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Tom Duncan at (256)705-2147

From the President

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

Back in December I wrote here about using my newly reacquired CW copy skills to work a rare DX station and hoping for a return QSL card for Christmas. Well, Christmas came late. On Saturday, January 15 my mailbox presented me with the coveted card. There's more about this in an accompanying article.

The ARRL National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) kicked off in January and a recent report from the League puts the activity (based on number of QSO's) at about 50% of the W1AW/x Centennial blast from 2015. Jim N4KH along with Dave KN4OK activated Russell Cave a few Saturday's ago. And Warren KJ4RAQ who's dragging a trailer out west with his XYL Karen did some short activations from Joshua Tree and Death Valley National Parks.

While chasing, mostly unsuccessfully, the VP8SGI DXpedition these past few days I can't get out of my head the recent untimely passing Jerry Fiore N4JF. Jerry was not a NADXC club member but many of us throughout the DX and contest community knew him. One member noted that on the night of his passing, Jerry had successfully worked VP8 on two additional band-modes. I'm pretty sure his surviving family could care less, but to Jerry he probably went

to bed that night happy.

I've spent time over the course of this DXpedition in the chase on different bands & modes. Sometimes I'll spend hours calling and be rewarded with the contact. Sometimes I'll give up and go do something else.

Which brings me to my point about pile-up behavior for these most-wanted entities. To hear the desperation in some phone callers and band cops, one would think the food on their children's plates hinged on whether the contact gets made.

DX to the newcomer might be CO8LY. To the old timer, only the rare ones are still on the list. There's a lot in-between. QRP guys enjoy the miles / watt challenges. Antenna restricted guys chase DXCC with attic dipoles. Life's a journey, enjoy the ride. Ham radio is a hobby to be enjoyed but don't let it be your life.

73,

Mark N4BCD

North Alabama DX Club - President

Mixers Outside the Receiver Front-End

Program by Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

The day may soon be upon us when mixers will disappear entirely from transceivers to become quaint memories, like cathode ray tubes and dial-pulse telephones. When that happens, they will still be represented in industrial electronic circuits. KG4CUY will discuss some of these in the February program. Get to the Golden Corral next Tuesday at 6:00 for dinner, 7:00 for the business meeting, and 7:30 for the program.



January Meeting Minutes

By Kelley Vann Johns, W4VPZ, NADXC Secretary/Treasurer

Members attending: 26
Guests: 1 – now a member

Announcements

We have an agreement with the Golden Corral that the temporary occupation of the meeting room by the Lions Club would not happen again. Fortunately the situation was resolved in time for our meeting and program to take place.

Tom KG4CUY had news about KCOW's one-man DXpedition, "Cows over the World" event. Many bovine puns were offered by the membership.

No one reported difficulty connecting to W4QB. The repeater status remains the same; the primary issue seems to be the feedline. Ron W4VM reported on trying to coordinate time with Rod Richardson & his mother to make the feedline replacement.

MD WA4DXP on NPOTA activation: WA4DXP plans to activate Little River Canyon National Park with William KK4FDF later in the year. MD also mentioned activating Russell Cave, a more rare site.

Mark reminded everyone of the hopeful CW contact and sending a QSL card late last year. Mark then showed the card received on Saturday from Monk Apollo SV2ASP/A Mount Athos, a belated Christmas present.

Mark had in his notes but missed reporting "Congratulations to Howard Graves W4KTX on his upgrade to Extra last weekend."

NADXC Officers and Directors

President	Mark Brown, N4BCD
Vice President	Jim Spikes, N4KH
Secretary/ Treasurer	Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ
At-large directors	Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

DX Worked

MD Smith WA4DXP – Antarctica

Mark Brown N4BCD – 19 states on CW

Bob Friend KC4TNC – Antarctica (unconfirmed), Guam (confirmed)

Stephen Smith KK4TJP – Seychelles, South Cook, St. Barthelemy (2 bands), St. Helena (2 bands), Saba, Haiti

Ralph King K1KOB – got VK9WA QSL card for IO CW

Al Watson – YB8/DL3KZA, VK9WA, S79C, PU0/PU0FDN, CE0Y/RZ3FW, 3D2RJ, TZ9A, YF1AR/8, 3B9FR, 9M2SI, RWOCR, JD1BMH, FK8IK, YB8RW, ZL9A, T88UW

Tom Duncan KG4CUY – TY8CR, T88, CO8LY

Steve Werner AG4W – S01, JD1 on 160m, ZL9 on 30m

Kelley W4VPZ Treasurer's Report

The current bank account balance is \$4343.13.

Membership Applications

Stephen Smith KK4TJP presented his application and was voted in as a DX Club member.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Club Budget. The attached budget was reviewed by the membership and approved by vote.

Kudos were offered to Bill Bathgate KD8IGK and others for keeping the club strong.

Some DXpedition funding requests have been received. A list will be published in the Longpath for the Club membership to consider. The initial amount budgeted for support is \$400, but the Club may consider stretching that funding later in the year.

Program: Bob DePierre K8KI presented a program on baluns.

Experiments with WSJT-X

By Jim Spikes, N4KH

With some spare time during the Christmas holidays, I began experimenting with the digital modes JT65 and JT-9 as a tool for weak signal DXing. There are two programs I identified for these modes, WSJT-X, and JT65-HF. Both are free downloads. I settled into using WSJT-X and so far I'm pretty impressed. There is definitely DX out there! My QSOs include YV4DYJ, PY2XZ, NP4AM, PU1KNG, MOJBM, CX3CC, JA1KXQ, F1GTU, DJ1TU, KH6SAT, ZS1AW, VK4NUM, and a new country for me - YJOAFU (Vanuatu). All of these were made using 5 to 20 watts or so. High power levels are discouraged with these modes. And yes, contacts with these modes count for DXCC and other awards. I made quite a few QSOs on 6 meters also although no DX yet.

WSJT-X implements communication protocols or "modes" called JT4, JT9, JT65, and WSPR, as well as one called Echo. The JTxx modes were all designed for making reliable, confirmed QSOs under extreme weak-signal conditions. They use nearly identical message structure and "source encoding," the efficient compression of standard messages. JT65 was designed for EME ("moonbounce") on the VHF/UHF bands, and has also proved very popular and effective for worldwide QRP communication at HF.

JT65 is the musical sounding mode

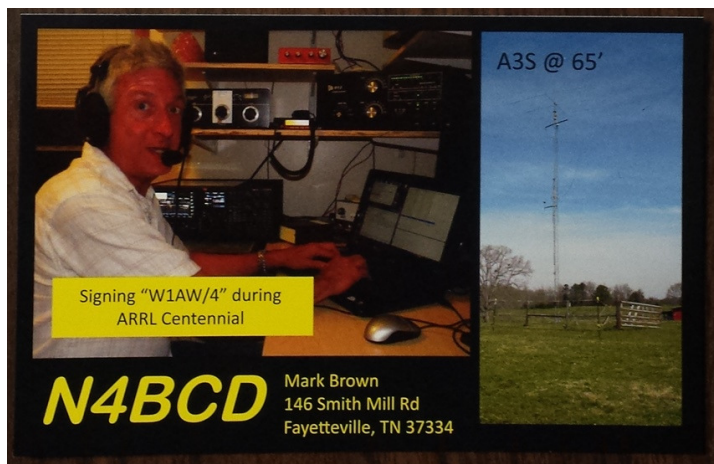
Cont'd on p. 5

73 de SV2ASP/A By Mark Brown, N4BCD

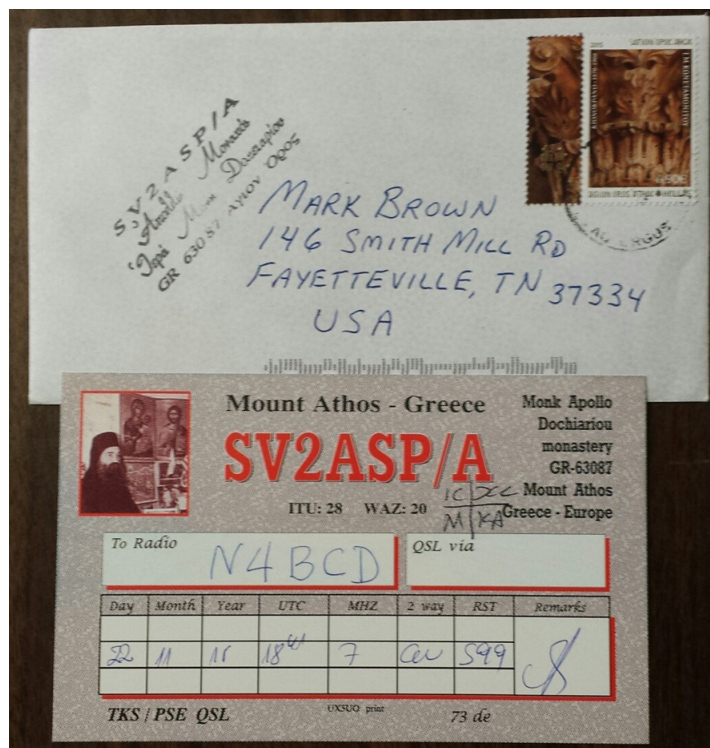
QSL'ing has been called the final courtesy. After the contact, which might have been a moments or hours long QSO, hams will exchange a QSL cards commemorating the on-air event when femtowatts of energy conveyed at least the minimum exchange of callsign and signal report information.

Hams use a variety of styles in their QSL cards, from simple one-sided mono-color cards displaying basics of callsign and address, to multi-color renditions featuring photos and listings of equipment & awards. Some of them are even folded to include yet more photos.

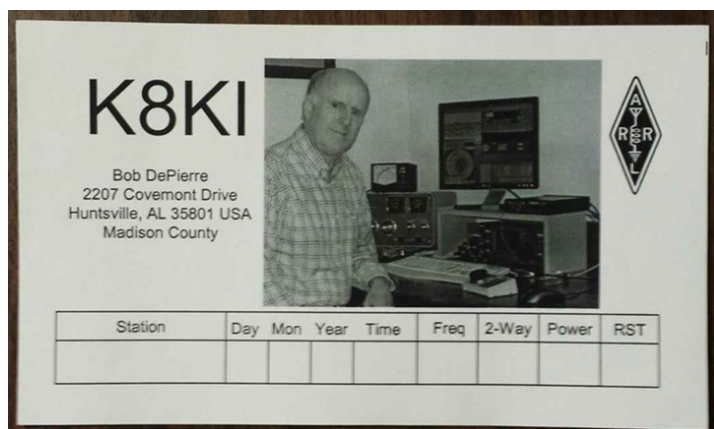
I was overjoyed at the recent receipt of a coveted QSL card from a rare DX station. The contact was made using my very new CW skills and I wasn't totally sure that I made the contact correctly, i.e. I "think" he heard me and got my callsign correct. That joy was tempered when my boss and DX competitor Bob K8KI got his QSL card from the same rare contact but totally different than the card I got. Photos will help illustrate.



Above, Mark's card, signed "Yours in Christ. 73, Mark" with \$20 inside folded sheet of paper and inside a legal sized envelope. A self addressed letter-sized envelope was included for return QSL.



For Mark, a simple one-sided card



Bob's card, signed, with \$10 inside folded sheet of paper was sent inside a letter sized envelope. No return envelope was included. Bob's returned QSL on the next page.

Cont'd on p. 4

The LongPath Staff

Publisher/Editor:

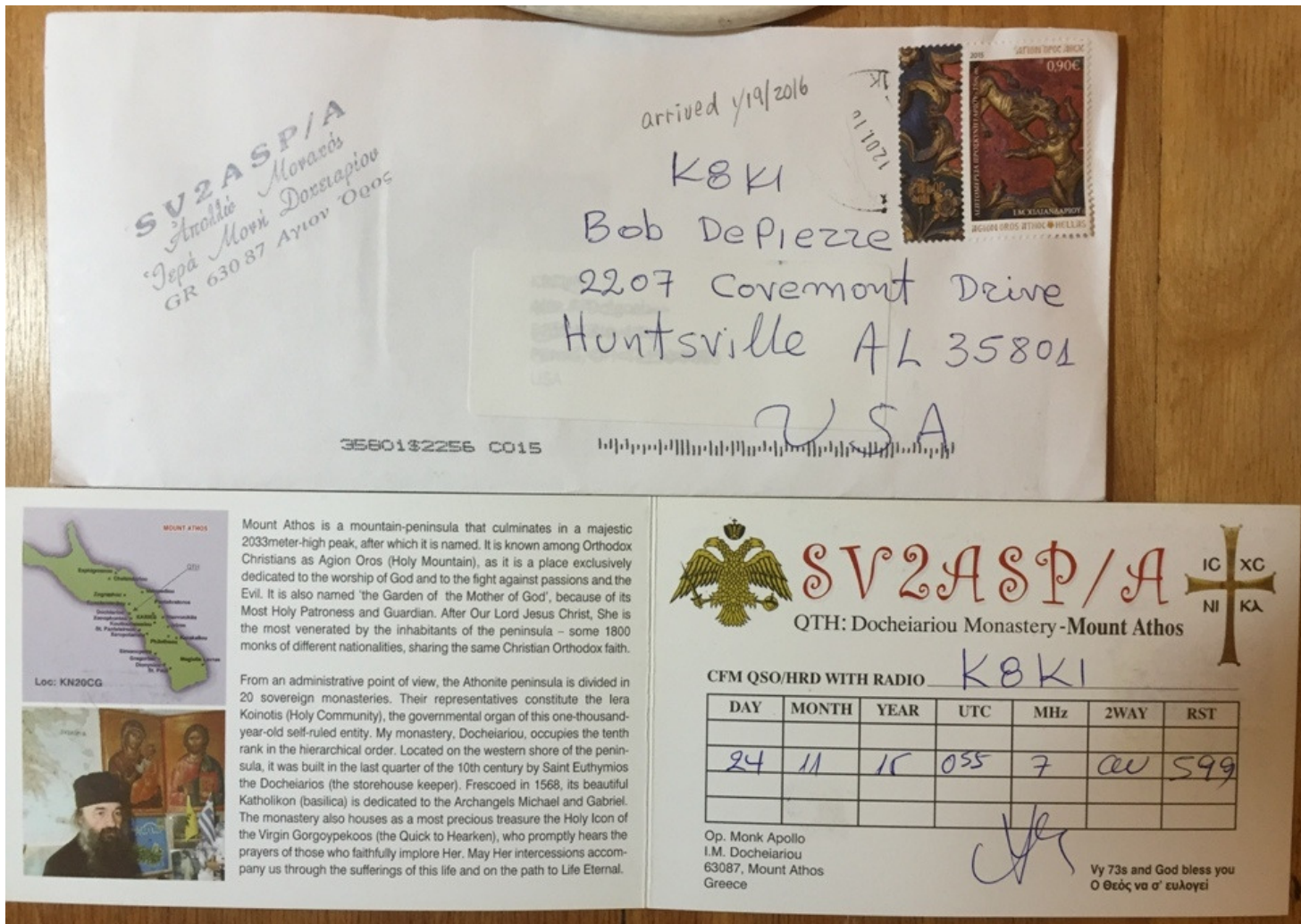
Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Departments:

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ, Minutes

Mark Brown, N4BCD, From the President



Why did Bob receive back the more elaborate card shown above, plus the prayer card shown to the right? Does Monk Apollo know Bob to be the more devout Christian? Did he figure by having to go to the trouble of finding an envelope and addressing it, he might as well send the big card? [Or does Bob know something Mark doesn't? - ed.] Either way, we're both happy with the cards and Steve AG4W our resident card-checker assures us that they're equally good for DXCC credit.



DX Contests for February

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

CQWW RTTY WPX Contest, (RTTY), 80-10 meters

Feb 13, 0000Z to Feb 14, 2400Z

Exchange: RST & Serial No.

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.cqwxrtty.com

RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest (PH/CW), 160 meters

Feb 13, 2100Z to Feb 13, 0100Z

Exchange: RST plus Serial No. (& UK district)

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.rsgbcc.org

Asia-Pacific Sprint, (CW), 40 & 20 meters

Feb 13, 1100Z to Feb 13, 1300Z

Exchange: RST & serial #

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.jsfc.org/apsprint/aprule.txt

ARRL Intl. DX Contest, (CW), 160-10 meters

Feb 20, 0000Z to Feb 21, 2359Z

Exchange: RST plus State/Province; DX send RST plus pwr.

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.arrl.org-dx

CQ 160 Meter Contest (PH), 160 meters

Feb 21, 2200Z to Feb 23, 2200Z

Exchange: RS plus State/Province/CQ zone

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.CQ160.com/rules.htm

REF French Contest (PH), 80-10 meters

Feb 27, 0600Z to Feb 28, 1800Z

Exchange: RS plus Serial No.; F stns. send Dept.

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.concourse.r-e-f.org/contest-rules

UBA (Belgium) Contest (CW), 80-10 meters

Feb 27, 1300Z to Feb. 28, 1300Z

Exchange: RST plus Serial No.; ON stns. send province

See page 92, Feb. QST and www.uba.be/en/hf/contest-rules

ARRL Intl. DX Contest, (PHONE), 160-10 meters

Mar 5, 0000Z to Mar 6, 2400Z

Exchange: RS plus State/Province; DX send RS plus pwr

See www.arrl.org/contests

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware.

Chuck, N4NM

Experiments with WSJT-X

(cont'd from p. 2)

you may have heard on 3576, 7076, 14076, or 21076. The QSOs take a little time. Each station takes turns

transmitting at one minute intervals in a tightly timed fashion, and the exchange contains only the most basic information. You can putter around

your station, work on a project, carry on a conversation and do other things while occasionally glancing at the screen and clicking your mouse as necessary. There is quite a bit of activity on all bands. You can read more about these modes on the internet, and WSJT-X specifically at <http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/wsjt.html>. There was also an excellent article by Steve Ford, WB8IMY, in the April 2011 issue of QST (available on the ARRL website).

Perhaps someone in the club with more experience using these modes could do a program later this year! If interested please contact me.

Jim N4KH

1930	Tx	491	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	EM64
1931	-16	0.5	491	#	KG7HAX	YJ0AFU RRR
1932	Tx	491	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	EM64
1934	-1	0.5	492	#	YJ0AFU	K2DAR R-17
1935	-13	0.1	491	#	CQ	YJ0AFU RH42
1936	Tx	491	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	EM64
1937	-16	0.1	492	#	K3JAE	YJ0AFU -17
1938	Tx	491	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	EM64
1939	-17	0.1	493	#	CQ	YJ0AFU RH42
1940	Tx	493	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	EM64
1941	-16	0.3	495	#	N4KH	YJ0AFU -06
1942	Tx	493	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	R-17
1943	-16	0.3	496	#	N4KH	YJ0AFU RRR
1944	Tx	493	#	YJ0AFU	N4KH	73
1945	-18	0.3	495	#	CQ	YJ0AFU RH42
1946	-16	-0.6	495	#	YJ0AFU	KA5YCM EM40
1947	-17	0.2	495	#	ZL3TE	YJ0AFU -13
1948	-7	-0.0	495	#	YJ0AFU	N4SVC EM80